

Impact Evaluation on Cultural Resources

The purpose of the study is to determine if changes in TVA's reservoir system operating policies would produce greater overall public value.

Background

TVA is conducting a formal evaluation of its policies for operating the Tennessee River reservoir system, including an analysis of the economic impacts of any potential changes in these policies. Existing policies affect how reservoir levels fluctuate, when changes in reservoir levels occur, and the amount of water flowing through the reservoir system at different times of the year, depending on rainfall.

The purpose of the study is to determine if changes in TVA's reservoir system operating policies would produce greater overall public value. Technical analyses will be performed to evaluate the impacts of TVA's current policies and the potential impacts of alternatives on a number of resource areas and other issues.

The two-year Reservoir Operations Study (ROS) is scheduled for completion in October 2003.

The impacts on cultural resources (archaeological sites, historic properties, and historic structures) will be evaluated as part of the ROS, and the results will be documented in an environmental impact statement (EIS). TVA will conduct the study in accordance with National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements.

Potential Impacts

- Historic properties include districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that are locally or nationally significant in American history or prehistory.
- The potential impacts to historic properties include residential development and soil erosion. Changes in reservoir operating policies could increase or decrease the potential for additional erosion and development.

Geography

- Archaeological sites and historic buildings and structures eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places can be found throughout the Tennessee Valley.
- Sites potentially affected include TVA reservoir lands, historic buildings on adjacent lands, and numerous archaeological sites associated with Native American and European-African settlement on public lands managed by TVA.

Scope of Analysis

- To help understand how changes in reservoir operating policies might affect cultural resources, information on historic properties will be combined with information from studies focused on erosion trends and land development.
- Historic structures potentially eligible for listing on the National Register in the area of potential effect will be identified and located on maps.

- TVA will rely on existing data to conduct analyses, including surveys of state historic structures, previous TVA inventories of historic structures, State archaeological site survey files, and TVA archaeological survey data.
- Additional data is being collected on reservoirs where no systematic archaeological site inventories have been conducted.
- TVA will follow the regulations of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) to guide its analysis. ACHP procedures include the identification, evaluation of significance, and assessment of effect on all historic properties.
- The potential effects of changes in reservoir policies will be shared in formal consultations with the State Historic Preservation Officers of the Valley states and other stakeholders, as required by the National Historic Preservation Act.

For More Information

To submit comments or get additional information, members of the public are invited to visit TVA's Web site at www.tva.com, to call toll-free 888-882-7675, to fax TVA at 865-632-3146, or to write to ROS Project Manager David Nye, Tennessee Valley Authority, c/o WT 11A, 400 West Summit Hill Dr., Knoxville, TN 37902.